

106TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. CON. RES. 296

Expressing the sense of the Congress regarding the necessity to expedite the settlement process for discrimination claims against the Department of Agriculture brought by African-American farmers.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 30, 2000

Mr. DICKEY (for himself and Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary, and in addition to the Committee on Agriculture, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

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## CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Congress regarding the necessity to expedite the settlement process for discrimination claims against the Department of Agriculture brought by African-American farmers.

Whereas the Secretary of Agriculture has conceded that the Department of Agriculture and agents of the Department discriminated against certain African-American farmers during the period from 1981 through 1996 in the delivery of Commodity Credit Corporation and disaster assistance programs;

Whereas, to permit the resolution of complaints that were filed by these farmers before July 1, 1997, but not re-

sponded to by the Department of Agriculture in a timely manner, section 741 of the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1999 (112 Stat. 2681–30; 7 U.S.C. 2279 note; as contained in section 101(a) of division A of Public Law 105–277), waived relevant statutes of limitation that prevented the adjudication of these complaints;

Whereas, on April 14, 1999, United States District Judge Paul Friedman issued a final opinion and order that finalized class action lawsuits filed by African-American farmers;

Whereas the farmers were ordered to file claims to determine their eligibility for the settlement ordered by the court;

Whereas the court has set and the Secretary of Agriculture has entered into a final settlement consent decree that has become the order of the court;

Whereas, once a claimant is deemed to be a member of the class and has proven discrimination, the claimant is entitled to the settlement set forth by the consent decree; and

Whereas the large volume of claims filed as ordered by the court have severely delayed the settlement process as defined by the consent decree: Now, therefore, be it

1        *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*  
 2   *concurring)*, That it is the sense of Congress that the Sec-  
 3   retary of Agriculture, the Attorney General, and the adju-  
 4   dicator and facilitator named in the consent decree should  
 5   strictly follow the consent decree, commit the resources

- 1 necessary to expedite the settlement process, and ensure
- 2 that settlements are reached in an expeditious manner.

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